

Representative **Fred Jarrett**
41st Legislative District

Lack of accountability in state operating budget...

Our main priority this session was to make minor adjustments to the biennial budget by adopting a supplemental operating budget. The objective of a supplemental budget is to account for any unanticipated spending on things like increases in school enrollment, transportation costs for school districts due to higher gas prices, or natural disasters like forest fires, floods and earthquakes.



I continue to believe the Legislature must make budget decisions by focusing on what it should buy for taxpayer dollars, not what it should spend. Goals and priorities should be used as the Legislature’s guiding principle in its purchasing decisions. The Legislature missed the boat on this one.

The supplemental budget increases state spending, continuing the tired incremental budgeting approach which, every biennium, assures the Legislature is presented a budget that can’t be supported by projected revenues. 2007 will be no exception.

I continue to press for budgets based on performance, not spending. Improvements are happening. Gov. Locke’s Priorities of Government (known as POG) and Gov. Gregoire’s Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) initiatives advance the state of the art in public sector management. But the Legislature continues to do business the old-fashioned way: measuring spending, not results.

I’ve strived for accountable budgeting since I was first elected, and I’m disappointed to report we aren’t there yet.

Responsible supplemental capital budget adopted...

The supplemental capital budget proposal includes important projects for a number of districts across the state. When creating the budget, it’s critical to consider the level of spending and the amount of debt the state is taking on.

This session there was disagreement between the majority party in the House and members of the Republican caucus about the level of bonding debt the state took on. As the ranking member of the Capital Budget Committee, I lead the opposition to what we viewed as excessive debt. I’m pleased at the outcome: over \$100 million less in state debt. Even with a restrained bond bill, the supplemental capital budget proposal funded a variety of projects from prison expansion to water quality improvement projects in the Puget Sound region.

I am particularly pleased at our progress in improving the budgeting processes. We’ve increased the number of competitive projects thereby reducing the influence of politics in funding projects, and we have begun looking at needs beyond the biennium in making capital budget decisions.

Small steps, but important ones.

2006 election-year mailing restrictions

Due to election-year mailing restrictions, my ability to communicate with the people I represent is severely limited. Therefore, this will be my final legislative report to you until next December.

I am, however, allowed to respond to ALL specific, written requests from the citizens of the 41st District. If you would like to be updated on issues of importance to you, please send a letter or an e-mail to my office regarding your interest, and I’ll be happy to provide you with the information you need.

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2006 Session Wrap-up
41st Legislative District

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Representative Fred Jarrett

April 2006

Dear Neighbors:

The Legislature completed its scheduled 60-day session March 8. We ended the session with some true accomplishments to report and unfortunately some disappointments as well.

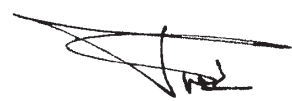
This newsletter will provide you with information on how the Legislature handled the budget and other important issues, like education and transportation, that were tackled this session.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who contacted me and shared your thoughts and concerns while I was in Olympia.

I'm always glad to hear from you and welcome your thoughts and ideas. Please keep your comments coming!

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your state representative.

Sincerely,



Fred Jarrett



will be made up of nine members, six of whom are appointed by the governor plus the elected executives of King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties.

The commission will be required to submit its proposal to form a permanent regional transportation governing entity to the 2007 Legislature. The commission will also be required to evaluate transportation governance issues like transit agency boundary adjustments and consolidation options.

Public safety and mobility, not politics, will now guide transportation planning. It creates more certainty in the process, by making clear when and in what order decisions must be made, and transparency, because it will require the "mega-projects" to have financial and implementation plans in place prior to a vote of the people.

HB 2871 was a particular milestone for me. Since my first year in the Legislature, I've worked on east-side transportation investment. This year, I represented my colleagues during the negotiations on the final bill, and helped build large, bipartisan majorities for an important piece of legislation to all of us who drive or take transit on the east-side.

Holding firm on requiring educational excellence for Washington students...

Washington students have a right to expect they will receive a quality education when they graduate from high school. The global nature of today's society and workplace demands it of them. The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) was created by the Legislature a decade ago to ensure students would graduate with tools they will need to succeed after high school. However, this year's 10th-graders, the class of 2008, are the first students that must pass the reading, writing and math sections of the WASL as a condition of receiving a certificate of achievement at graduation. In 2010, the science section will be added to the list of sections which must also be passed. The Legislature looked at a variety of ways of measuring if students have reached graduation standards.

That said, we must remember the reason for the WASL isn't to punish students but to be able to evaluate the performance of our public education system. Fulfilling the mandates of our constitution, and our duty to our children, requires as much. But it also requires we provide every opportunity for students to succeed.

Consequently, knowing students process information differently, we created alternative assessments to ensure all students can demonstrate their success. Senate Bill 6475 was adopted, with my support, allowing a student's SAT or ACT scores to be used for the math section of the WASL. Vocational and technical students will be able to submit a sample collection of work, which can be collected from academic, career and technical or remedial courses for review.

The Legislature began to make strides the last two sessions by passing legislation to give students more than one opportunity to retake the WASL. Providing students alternative methods to prove they've met the WASL state standards and offering remedial classes, tutors and expanded summer school programs are all excellent steps in ensuring ALL Washington students achieve high academic standards and graduate from high school on time.



41st Legislative District

2006 Session Wrap-up

Strategic higher education planning...

The lack of statewide consistent goals and strategies for our higher education system has resulted in a piecemeal approach to its policies and funding. During the 2005 session I introduced House Bill 1434. I reintroduced it again this session, and although it received a courtesy hearing, it didn't move out of the Higher Education Committee.

Although I'm disappointed by the mere courtesy consideration, I am pleased we've begun to make incremental changes to Washington's higher education system as a result of forcing the dialogue.

For instance, legislation was adopted to expand access to higher education using the university center model and expanded funding and authority for baccalaureates at community colleges. It will target degree subject areas where we have the most acute shortages of graduates in the north Puget Sound region. Businesses desperately need graduates for skilled employees to compete in a location where students need increased access to higher education facilities. Enrollments in high-cost, high-demand fields, like nursing, were funded in the supplemental budget.

Each of these ideas came from the strategy in HB 1434, but HB 1434 embraced a long-term strategy for our higher education system, and these actions continue the incremental approach divorced from a longer term goal.

Another tool created is the Washington Customized Employment Workforce Training program. It was created for employers locating or expanding in the state. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges will administer the program. Preference in granting training allowances is given to employers with fewer than 50 employees.



Providing consumers choice in health care...

Working Washington families struggle to find affordable medical insurance and businesses large and small find it more difficult to provide health coverage for their employees because of the many government rules telling them what they must include in their health plans.

I support a multi-faceted approach to health care that will enable consumers to find coverage at costs they can afford, including providing options for employers to find affordable health care coverage by forming small groups.

I supported legislation to study removing unnecessary government mandates on health care coverage which simply raise everyone's rates. While I'm encouraged the legislation passed the House and the Senate, unfortunately it failed to make its way to the governor's desk because there was disagreement between the two chambers on final details in the bill. I'm hopeful we'll get it through the Legislature and signed next session.

I was pleased to see support for allowing state employees to manage their medical expenses using health savings accounts, I support providing the same opportunity for small businesses.

We simply must give health care decisions back to patients, not insurance companies or government, by creating more affordable, flexible choices that will work best for families and improve access to quality health care.



One step closer to solving Puget Sound's transportation crisis...

I'm proud of the way Republican and Democrat legislators came together to create a plan to help the Puget Sound region solve its transportation congestion problems. House Bill 2871 will bring public safety, accountability and transparency to the planning process through a new Puget Sound regional governance commission, which will create a comprehensive transportation solution that considers roads and transit. It also ties the funding for the SR 520 bridge to the Alaskan Way Viaduct, making it more likely both projects will be funded and these necessary improvements will indeed move forward.

The bill created a Regional Transportation Commission and tasked the commission with developing a regional transportation governance proposal and finance plan. The commission



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